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January 6, 2001

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Dockets Management Branch
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket Number 98P-0151/CP1

Dear FDA:

Last year, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a landmark policy to stop purchasing meat from downed cows for federal programs, including the National School Lunch Program. The agency stated, "USDA will no longer accept ground beef that includes product from non-ambulatory cattle, commonly known as 'downers'." This development shows a growing consensus - even among livestock industry and government officials - that the marketing and slaughter of downed animals is unacceptable.
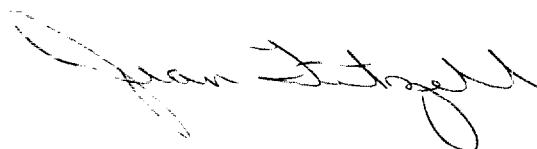
Animals who are too sick or injured even to stand should not be allowed to enter the human food chain because of the increased risk for bacterial contamination and disease. There is also some evidence that some downed animals may be afflicted with a form of BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy or "Mad Cow Disease"), a disease which has been linked to a fatal human illness (CJD or Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease).

It is impossible to move downed animals humanely, and they are typically pushed with tractors or dragged with chains - inhumane processes which cause injuries ranging from bruises and abrasions, to broken bones and torn ligaments.

Since downed animals comprise a very small percentage of animals slaughtered, prohibiting their marketing will cause no undue economic hardship. Industry experts have estimated that 90% percent of downed animals can be prevented with better care and handling. Removing the market for downed animals will provide an incentive to industry to prevent downed animals in the first place.

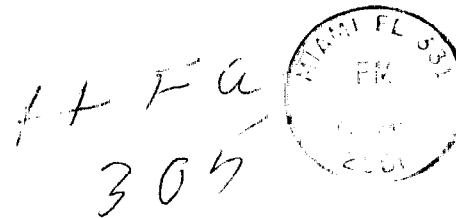Please put an end to this threat to humans and cruelty to animals.

Sincerely yours,

98P-0151

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